

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 /048 W

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R 171230Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8722

INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BRASILIA 2926

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, BR, VE, US

SUBJECT: REACTION TO ALLEGED REMARK BY SECRETARY KISSINGER ABOUT
VENEZUELAN LEADERSHIP

1. UNDER A BANNER HEADLINE "KISSINGER RECOGNIZES 'VENEZUELAN LEADERSHIP'", PRESTIGIOUS O ESTADO DE SAO PAULO APRIL 12 RAN AN INNER-PAGE STORY, DATELINED WASHINGTON BUT NOT SOURCED, QUOTING SECRETARY KISSINGER AS DECLARING, DURING SWEARING-IN OF AMBASSADOR SHLAUDEMAN, THAT U.S. "RECOGNIZES AND RESPECTS THE ROLE OF GROWING LEADERSHIP CARRIED OUT BY VENEZUELA". STORY WENT ON TO CITE UNIDENTIFIED "OBSERVERS" AS ATTRIBUTING "GREAT SIGNIFICANCE" TO REMARK IN THAT IT REPRESENTS "THE FIRST TIME HE HAS PUBLICLY RECOGNIZED THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF A LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRY".

2. IN ACCOMPANYING ARTICLE, O ESTADO RECALLED SHARP L.A. REACTION TO, AND DIPLOMATIC EMBARRASSMENT CAUSE FOR BRAZIL BY, PRESIDENT NIXON'S STATEMENT (DURING 1971 VISIT TO WASHINGTON OF PRESIDENT MEDICI) THAT "AS BRAZIL GOES, SO GOES LATIN AMERICA". NOTING THAT "BY COINCIDENCE THE GREATEST REACTION CAME PRECISELY FROM VENEZUELA", ARTICLE ENDED BY ASKING, "WHAT WILL HAPPEN NOW TO VENEZUELA (SINCE IT HAS BEEN) PRAISED BY KISSINGER?".

3. FOLLOWING THROUGH, O ESTADO IN LEAD EDITORIAL APRIL 15
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ON SECRETARY'S VISIT TO L.A. SAID "... IF, FAR FROM PRO-

CEEDING WITH CRITICAL REALISM, KISSINGER TAKES THE OPPORTUNITY OF PRAISING VENEZUELAN 'LEADERSHIP' IN ORDER TO REAFFIRM THAT HE INTENDS . . . TO VISIT LATIN AMERICA . . . IT ONLY SERVES TO SHOW THAT THE MUCH-DISCUSSED VISIT IS NOW AIMED NOT AT RESUMING THE 'NEW DIALOGUE', BUT RATHER AT GRATIFYING THE VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT, WHOSE PETROLEUM THE U.S. WANTS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IN ORDER NOT TO HAVE TO GIVE UP ITS ABUNDANT STRATEGIC RESERVES".

4. COMMENT: EXCEPT FOR PASSING REFERENCE IN ANOTHER SAO PAULO NEWSPAPER, O ESTADO IS THE ONLY JOURNAL WE HAVE NOTED TO HAVE TREATED THE REPORTED REMARK BY THE SECRETARY. THE PAPER'S OVER-REACTION--ITS SPLENETIC TONE, ITS GLOSSING-OVER OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING THE LEADER AND PLAYING A LEADING ROLE, ITS EXAGGERATED INTERPRETATION OF SWEARING-IN CEREMONY LANGUAGE--PROBABLY STEMS MOSTLY FROM THE COMBINATION OF PRIDE AND GENUINE DISCOMFORT WITH WHICH MOST BRAZILIANS REACTED TO PRESIDENT NIXON'S REMARKS. THUS, O ESTADO SCARCELY CONCEALED RELIEF AT PURPORTEDLY SEEING THE MANTLE PASSED TO VENEZUELA, BUT IT IS RELIEF WITH A STRONG ADMIXTURE OF MALICE AND RANCOR.

CRIMMINS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, POLITICAL LEADERS, AMBASSADORS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 APR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BRASIL02926
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750135-0225
From: BRASILIA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750439/aaaabkdd.tel
Line Count: 83
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <04 SEP 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <01 DEC 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REACTION TO ALLEGED REMARK BY SECRETARY KISSINGER ABOUT VENEZUELAN LEADERSHIP
TAGS: PFOR, PDIP, PGOV, BR, VE, US, XM, O ESTADO DE SAO PAULO, (KISSINGER, HENRY A), (SHLAUDEMANN, HARRY W)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006